

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9987

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMZMBASSY BRASILIA 546

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 3125

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (P A R A . 3 .)

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

BUENOS AIRES FOR KUBISCH

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS BL

SUBJ: PRESIDENT' S SPEECH

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. PRESIDENT BANZER' S HARD- HTTING SPEECH LAST NIGHT WAS A
DRAMATIC CLIMAX TO AN EVENING OF WILD FLYING RUMORS
THAT BANZER HAD RESIGNED (SOME REPORTS EVEN HAD HIM KILLED) AND
REPLACED BY A MILITARY JUNTA.

2. IN THE LATE AFTERNOON THERE WERE MEETINGS OF MNR AND FSB MILITANT
S
IN THEIR RESPECTIVE MINISTRIES WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE RUMORS AND
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UNCERTAINTY. REPORTEDLY THE MEETINGS WERE HELD IN RESPONSE TO A STATEMENT TO THE PRESS BY ARMED FORCES COMMANDER IN CHIEF GENERAL ZENTENO ANAYA CRITICIZING THE PARTIES THAT MAKE UP THE FPN, I. E., THE MNR AND FSB, FOR BEING " INOPERATIVE" AND " NOT LIVING UP TO THEIR PROMISE". IN A STATEMENT TO REPORTERS FPN SECRETARY GENERAL JAIME PONCE CABALLERO, OBVIOUSLY RESPONDING TO ZENTENO ANAYA' S CRITICISMS SAID, " THE NATION IS IN DANGER" AND CALLED ON ALL FORCES TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT TO UNIT IN THE FACE OF " INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS ASSOCIATED WITH BAD BOLIVIANS HUNGRY FOR POWER".

3. ALSO LATE IN THE AFTERNOON ZENTENO ANAYA AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HIGH COMMAND WENT TO THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, FURTHER GIVING RISE TO SPECULATION AS TO WHAT MIGHT BE HAPPENING. ALSO THERE WERE MININTERIOR CASTRO AND EX- MININTERIOR ARCE AND LATER SEVERAL MNR AND FSB MINISTERS APPEARED. UPON THE DEPARTURE AT ABOUT 9 P. M. OF THE MILITARY OFFICERS, ZENTENO ANAYA REFUSED TO COMMENT TO THE PRESS ON WHAT HAD OCCURRED IN THE PALACE, SAYING THAT MINDEFENSE MENDIETA WAS THE ONLY ONE AUTHORIZED TO SPEAK FOR THE ARMED FORCES ON THE SUBJECT. MENDIETA TOLD REPORTERS THAT THE MEETING WAS A ROUTINE ONE TO PERMIT THE OFFICERS TO REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT ON THEIR RECENT VISITS TO THE INTERIOR GARRISONS (LA PAZ 3017). ADDRESSING HIMSELF TO THE REAL ISSUE, HOWEVER, MENDIETA TOLD REPORTERS THAT THE HIGH COMMAND HAD REASSURED THE PRESIDENT OF THEIR FULL SUPPORT FOR HIM, HIS GOVERNMENT, AND " ALL HIS DECISIONS" AND FOR THE FPN AS THE " SALVATION" OF BOLIVIA. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT: BANZER' S SPEECH WAS A RESTATEMENT OF HIS TOTAL COMMITMENT TO THE CONCEPT OF COALITION GOVERNMENT AS PERSONIFIED IN THE FPN WITH MNR AND FSB PARTICIPATION. RECENT EVENTS SURROUNDING THE SELICH AFFAIR GAVE RISE TO SPECULATION WHETHER THE MILITARY WOULD TRY TO FORCE BANZER TO WITHDRAW FROM HIS COMMITMENT TO THE FPN OR EVEN POSSIBLY BREAK IT UP BY EXPELLING THE MNR. PRESUMABLY THIS WAS THE ISSUE IN DISCUSSION IN MEETINGS IN THE PALACE YESTERDAY, AND BANZER' S SPEECH WOULD INDICATE THAT HE CARRIED THE DAY, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. MINSEC GEN ESCOBARI TOLD ARMATT LATE IN THE AFTERNOON HAT BANZER WAS CONCERNED ABOUT ZENTENO ANAYA' S PUBLIC CRITICISMS OF THE FPN AND ABOUT UNSPECIFIED POLITICAL UNDERCURRENTS, PRESUMABLY IN THE MILITARY. WHILE ZENTENO ANAYA AS OFTEN PRIVATELY CRITICIZED THE FPN, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME HE HAS DONE SO PUBLICLY. IT IS WORTHY OF NOTE THAT HE AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HIGH COMMAND DID NOT STAY IN THE PALACE TO BE WITH

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THE PRESIDENT WHEN HE MADE HIS SPEECH, AS THEY USUALLY ARE FOR IMPORTANT PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGES. THIS WOULD SUGGEST THAT THEY ARE NOT AS FULLY IN ACCORD WITH THE PRESIDENT' S POSITION ON THE FPN AS MENDIETA' S STATEMENT WOULD INDICATE. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THEY WILL RESIGN THEMSELVES TO THIS POSITION AND/ OR

WHETHER ANY CHANGES WILL BE MADE IN THE MILITARY HIGH COMMAND.
END CONFIDENTIAL.
SIRACUSA

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NMAFVVZCZ

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